

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-11, as amended, remain herein. Claim 1 has been amended, and claim 5 has been canceled. Independent claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the moisture content of the micro balloons is less than 0.1% by mass, and to include the limitations from claim 5 in claim 1.

Applicants believe that the Amendment places this application fully in condition for allowance, and surely in better condition for any appeal. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment and allowance of all claims 1-4 and 6-11 are respectfully requested.

1. Applicants thank the Examiner for the telephone interview with applicants' representative on November 28, 2006, during which the Examiner indicated that if the words "wherein a content of the Si source and the Al source included in the inorganic microballoons is 90% by mass or more," were used in amended claim 1, the objection stated in the Advisory Action would be overcome, thereby placing this application in condition for allowance. Applicants' representative inquired whether this change could be made by this Supplementary Amendment rather than an RCE, and the Examiner agreed. It is applicants' understanding that the words added to claim 1 correspond to applicants' disclosure, page 8, lines 4-10, and originally filed claim 5 (last five lines).

2. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(a), or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hitachi Metals JP 2002-326881 (hereinafter JP '881) has been overcome.

Serial No.: 10/509,155
Docket No.: 28953.7272

The present U.S. application claims the benefit not only of the PCT international application, but also claims the benefit under the Paris Convention of the Japanese priority application filed March 29, 2002, which is several months earlier than publication date of the cited Japanese Patent Application Publication 2002-326881.

Submitted herewith, as attachment A, is a sworn English translation of applicants' Japanese Priority Application No. 2002-094113, which supports applicants' claims. Thus, applicants' Japanese Priority Application antedates JP '811 as a *de jure* prior art reference under U.S. law, thus mooted the rejection under §102(b) based upon JP '881.

3. Claims 1-8, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), over Inoue U.S. Patents 4, 871,693 and 4,698,317. Claim 5 has been canceled, and its limitation added to claim 1. Claims 2-4, 6-8, 10 and 11 depend from claim 1.

Applicants discovered a method of forming a cordierite porous body comprising providing cordierite forming materials comprising an Al source, an Si source, and an Mg source, and firing the materials to form cordierite, wherein the Al source and Si source are at least partially provided by inorganic micro balloons containing Al_2O_3 and SiO_2 , wherein a moisture content of the inorganic micro balloons is less than 0.1% by mass, and wherein a content of the Si source and the Al source included in the inorganic microballoons is 90% by mass or more and therefore an MgO content of less than 10% by mass.


Serial No.: 10/509,155
Docket No.: 28953.7272

Neither Inoue '693 nor Inoue '317 discloses that an Si source and an Al source comprise more than 90% by mass of micro balloons. Rather, Inoue teaches 10-65% MgO, and therefore, a total Si and Al content of 90% or less.

Thus, there is no disclosure in Inoue '693 or Inoue '317 that would have suggested applicants' claimed invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. Further, there is no disclosure or teaching in either Inoue '693 or Inoue '317 that would have suggested the desirability of combining any portions of those references effectively to anticipate or render obvious applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, claims 1-4, 6-8, 10 and 11 are patentable over Inoue '693 and/or Inoue '317, and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this ground of rejection, and allowance of all of those claims.

This application is now fully in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. The PTO is hereby authorized to charge/credit any fee deficiencies or overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-4293 (Order No. 28953.7272). If further amendments would place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is invited to call applicants' undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger W. Parkhurst
Reg. No. 25,177

Date: November 29, 2006

STEPTOE & JOHNSON LLP
1330 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 429-3000 Telephone
(202) 429-3902 Facsimile
RWP/GPM:mn1